

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance. A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is filed concurrently with this amendment.

Information Disclosure Statement

The indication that submitted foreign language documents have been considered to the extent of accompanying English-language explanations or translations is acknowledged with thanks.

Amendments to the Disclosure

Claims 18, 29-30, 34 and 36 are amended to address the matters raised under Section 112 (further detailed below), and to clarify the recitation of the invention.

The amendments to the claims are not believed to introduce new matter. For example, the amendments to claim 18 find support at least in former claim 21; the amendments to claim 30 find support at least in page 1, line 27; the amendment to claim 36 finds support at least in page 7, lines 11-12; and the amendment to claim 41 finds support at least in page 9, lines 14-17.

New claim 42, depending from claim 23, is introduced reciting subject matter corresponding to claim 35.

Claims 20-21 and 40 are canceled, without prejudice.

Formal Matters - Objections to the Claims

The Official Action rejected independent claim 18 and claims depending therefrom based on various informalities.

In particular, the Official Action objected to the position of the comma in "reinforced channel." In response, claim 18 has been amended in a manner believed to overcome the Official Action's objection. Claims 29, 30, and 34 are similarly amended.

The Official Action further objected to the recitation of a "side wall", both in claims 18 and 40.

In response, it is firstly noted that claim 40 is canceled. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the objection to claim 40 has been rendered moot.

As to claim 18, the Official Action first cites the recitation of claim 18 "channels being bounded by a side wall." However, it is respectfully submitted that the full recitation of the indicated phrase recites "each of said channels being bounded by a side wall". It is respectfully submitted that the description filed with the application makes clear that each channel is limited by a side wall which may have several portions (for instance for a channel with a square cross-section, the side wall comprises the four planar portions). When the description refers to a plurality of channels, it therefore recites "bounded by side walls", i.e. each of said channels is bounded by a side wall.

When a portion of the side wall of the channel is provided with an increased thickness, this channel is called "reinforced channel". The portion of the side wall which is supporting the reinforcement is called "the first portion" (see, e.g., page 5, lines 23-28). The remaining portions of said side wall constitute the second portion of the side wall. For instance, when considering Figure 4, the first portion is the peripheral portion of the side wall whereas the second portion is referred to as 36, 36' and 36" for the channel 38 (see, e.g., page 6, lines 1-18). Therefore, a side wall may be described as having a reinforcement or, in the same way, that a first portion of the side wall comprises a reinforcement.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this feature, as recited by claim 18, is clear and understandable in view of the specification filed with the application.

Withdrawal of the objection of the claims is respectfully requested.

Formal Matters - Section 112, first paragraph

The Official Action rejected claims 29, 30, 34 and 36 under 35 USC 112, first paragraph as not being in compliance with the written description requirement. The Official Action contends that claims 29, 30, 34 and 36 contain subject matter not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s),

at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

In response, claims 29, 30, 34 and 36 are amended in a manner believed to overcome the Official Action's objection in view of the written description requirement.

Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC 112, first paragraph is respectfully requested.

Formal Matters - Section 112, second paragraph

The Official Action rejected claims 29, 30, and 34 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

In response, claims 29, 30, and 34 have been amended in a manner believed to overcome the Official Action's rejection for indefiniteness.

Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph and examination of claims 29, 30, and 34 are respectfully requested.

Substantive Issues - Section 103

The Official Action rejected claims 18, 20-25, 27, 35, 36, and 38-41 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Hashimoto et al. (JP 2003/010616, translated as US 7,037,567 B2; hereinafter "HASHIMOTO").

The Official Action also rejects claims 18, 20-25, 27, 35, 36, and 38-41, in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over HASHIMOTO in view of disclosures

characterized by the Official Action as "Applicant's admission" (hereinafter "AA").

In response, even if the AA was available to one of skill to be combined with HASHIMOTO, it is firstly noted that claim 18 has been amended. It is respectfully submitted that HASHIMOTO, individually or in combination with AA, teaches or suggests a filter body comprising one-piece blocks each comprising channels wherein a transverse cross-section of the channels is not square shaped, and further where a thickness of internal portions of side walls of peripheral channels of said blocks is identical to a thickness of walls of the internal channels of said blocks, as recited by amended claim 18.

On the contrary, it is respectfully submitted that a reinforcing partition with a constant thickness and, at the same time providing the channels with a transverse cross-section which is not square shaped has never been suggested, at least in an assembled filter body.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 18 is patentable over HASHIMOTO, individually or in combination with the AA.

Further, combination of characteristics of claim 18 is particularly non-obvious when the reinforcing partition is defining the external face of a block, since filter blocks are usually shaped as rectangular parallelepipeds (see, e.g., claim 35 and new claim 42).

HASHIMOTO, in particular, fails to teach or suggest either a similar structure or a motivation to lead to the claimed invention. In contrast, as described at page 7, lines 16 to 21, the present invention discloses that the thickness of the internal portions of the side walls of the peripheral channels is identical to the thickness of the walls of the internal channels advantageously leads to an efficiency of filtration that is irrespective of the internal wall considered. This is neither taught nor suggested by HASHIMOTO.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that amended claim 18, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over HASHIMOTO, either individually or in combination with the AA. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under Sections 102 and 103 is respectfully requested.

It is also respectfully submitted that independent claims 29, 30, and 34 are patentable at least for the reasons set forth above.

From the foregoing, it will be apparent that Applicants have fully responded to the July 19, 2010 Official Action and that the claims as presented are patentable. In view of this, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims, as presented, and their early passage to issue.

In order to expedite the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the attorney for Applicants at the number provided below if the Examiner is of the opinion that

further discussion of this case would be helpful in advancing prosecution.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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